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ABSTRACT

Parents and teachers of learning-disabled children in a Christian elementary school did not have adequate knowledge and understanding of learning disabilities and the effect these disabilities have on a child's ability to function at home, in the classroom, and in other areas of life. A practicum project was developed to inform parents and teachers about learning disabilities and to provide emotional support for these adults. A support group was formed, called Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (CROSS). The group planned programs consisting of professional presentations and group discussions. Other activities of the practicum project included direct assistance for classroom teachers, individual testing for possible learning disabilities, and implementation of a program of educational therapy for learning-disabled students based on the model of the Norfolk Institute for Learning Disabilities. Results of the project showed that parents and teachers who attended CROSS meetings felt that they had a better understanding of learning disabilities and wanted the group to continue. In previous years, learning-disabled students had been withdrawn from the school due to parental dissatisfaction with school services; no learning-disabled students were withdrawn from the school the year the project was implemented. (Author/JDD)

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Increasing Information and Support for Parents and Teachers of Learning Disabled Students In Christian Schools

by

Nancy T. Akins

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Increasing Information and Support for Parents and Teachers of Learning Disabled Students in Christian Schools

by

Nancy T. Akins

Cluster XIX

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1988

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Approved:

May 4, 1988
Date of Final Approval of of Report

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Information and Support for Parents and Teachers of Learning Disabled Students in Christian Schools. Akins, Nancy T., 1988: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Specific Learning Disabilities, Parent Teacher Relationships, Parent Education, Educational Therapy, Teacher Inservice Training, Helping Relationships, Family School Relationship, Parent Teacher Cooperation, Parent Child Relationship.

This practicum addressed the information and support needs of parents and teachers of L.D. students in Christian school settings. During the previous years, the lack of understanding caused friction among parents, teachers and L.D. children. One result of this friction was the withdrawal of some L.D. students from the project setting.

The goals were to inform parents and teachers about learning disabilities and to provide emotional support for these adults. In addressing these goals, Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (C.R.O.S.S.) was formed to meet the information and support needs of parents and teachers. Programs consisted of professional presentations and group discussions. The writer also provided direct assistance for classroom teachers, initiated individual testing for possible learning disabilities and implemented the Norfolk Institute for Learning Disabilities (NILD) program of educational therapy.

Those who attended C.R.O.S.S. meetings expressed that they had a better understanding of specific learning disabilities and greatly appreciated the supportive interaction at the meetings. On the final evaluation, all respondents requested that C.R.O.S.S. be continued. In the project setting, all but one classroom teacher requested and received direct assistance for students having difficulty. Students were tested individually and those who were diagnosed as learning disabled were enrolled in educational therapy. No L.D. students were withdrawn from the project setting during the school year.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The setting for this practicum is a Christian school, a ministry of an Assembly of God church, which is located in a southern state known for its natural scenic beauty and mild climate. Although originally a citrus and agricultural center, growth in other industries such as electronics, manufacturing, distribution, and especially tourism have made the area one of the fastest growing communities in the United States. A large tourist attraction in the area has over 21 million visitors per year.

The population of the city was over 800,000 in 1984. Projections estimate an annual average of 30,000 which will bring the Metro population to over one million by 1990. The average unemployment rate is only 5.5%. Projections estimate that 145,000 new jobs will be established by 1990. As would be expected in such a growing area, construction is booming. By 1988, over eleven billion dollars of commercial, industrial and residential construction will take place in the Metro area. The church of the school setting has constructed a 5,000 seat auditorium which has cost approximately 26.5 million dollars. Funds are pledged by the 5,000

families who attend the church.

The cost of living in the area is slightly above the national average. The population is 87% white and 13% black. The Median Household Effective Buying Income is $22,292 which is higher than the average for the state.

By 1990, the state will be the fourth most populous state in the nation and the church location will be in the fastest growing metropolitan area in the state.

The growth and diversity of population is evident in the congregation. Members range from affluent millionaires to blue collar workers. The majority of members have come from out of state and most have a church background other than Assembly of God. The focal point of the teaching from the pulpit is Biblical principles rather than denominationalism.

There are over 100 full time church staff members. This number includes the school principal, assistant principal, school secretary and teachers.

The school opened in January, 1985, with 29 students in Kindergarten through third grade. Enrollment in September, 1985, was 112 students in Kindergarten through fourth grade. 1986-1987 school term included adding grade 5 and expanded the student body to 150. 1987-1988 added sixth grade with total enrollment of 190.

Significant features of the school include:

1. Enrollment is limited to families who are active members of the church.
2. A covenant agreement is signed by the parents and the Principal concerning mutual goals and active parental involvement in their child's education.
3. Every effort is made to hold class size to 18 students.
4. The curriculum is selected from a variety of excellent materials. Teachers prepare overviews for each subject using various resources. The material is taught by means of notes, lectures, and diverse classroom experiences.
5. Students keep their work in organized notebooks. Emphasis is placed on student production of work rather than consumption of workbooks or dittos.

It is acknowledged that this kind of school is not for every family. A strong commitment by parents is necessary for the daily supervision of homework and corrections of classwork. This is not a school for families who want the school and church to assume responsibility for rearing their children. It is a school for parents who accept their role of responsibility in training their children and who wish to extend authority to a school that will teach in accordance with agreed upon goals and objectives. For this reason, students who enter the school are predominately from families who have already been very active in their child's education. The students would be called "academically advantaged." They have had a wide variety of experiences including Sunday School, home teaching and many have had excellent preschool

experiences.

The majority are two parent families. Most mothers do not work outside the home. Although the family incomes vary greatly, the commitment to their children's education is a focal point in these families.

A strong fellowship has formed among these school families. There is an active Parent Volunteer Organization to meet various school needs.

Writer's Role

The writer is currently the Assistant Principal and educational therapist for learning disabled students (see Appendix A). Educational therapy is a new responsibility which will be in place of teaching kindergarten (1985-1987). The new role will include preliminary testing of students having difficulty in the classroom and referring some parents to have their child given more diagnostic testing. Students who are diagnosed as learning disabled and in need of educational therapy, will receive the therapy from this writer and another trained therapist. The writer will also continue staff training in the area of learning disabilities. The writer initiated this foundational element of training during teacher orientation in August, 1986.

In 1986-87, the writer recommended to teachers various classroom modifications which could be

implemented to increase the success of diagnosed or suspected L.D. students. These suggestions were readily accepted, implemented and, to varying degrees, successful. The writer has expanded the areas of responsibility pertaining to teacher training, curriculum and teaching technique modifications, preliminary L.D. student testing, student therapy and parental information, support and direction.

The writer's credentials include state certification in Elementary Education, Early Childhood, and a M.A. in Guidance and Counseling. She has been trained through the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities (see Appendix I), as an educational therapist for learning disabled students. Work experience includes nine years of teaching in the public school system and four years in the present church school setting.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Description of the Problem Situation

Being a new school, the project location was developing policies, procedures, and intra-school relationships. Although some Christian or private schools deliberately screen out students with learning difficulties, it had been determined that this setting would accept students who could function in a regular classroom if some modifications were made and some extra help was given. This included L.D. students and students within the low average range of mental ability.

Some parents purposely enrolled L.D. children in the setting out of dissatisfaction with other school systems. Classroom teachers had not had extensive training in working with L.D. children. Parents had varying degrees of understanding the characteristics of their L.D. child. When these children were expected to participate and produce academically challenging work, there were difficulties. The problem was three-fold. Unproductive relationships occurred between parent - child, teacher - child, and parent - teacher. A great deal of energy was expended on "blaming." The child blamed parents and/or teacher for his difficulties and lack of success. He often also blamed himself for being

so "stupid." Self-esteem was a major problem.

Likewise, parents blamed themselves, the child and/or the teacher for lack of academic success. The teacher often followed the same pattern of blaming herself, the child, or the parents. These negative relationships prevented parents and teachers from forming the most constructive educational program to meet students' academic and emotional needs.

If there had been no problem, parents and teachers would have worked together to plan how to best meet the needs of an L.D. child. The key would have been mutual cooperative effort. Strong positive relationships would have been built based on the common desire of helping the L.D. child become all that he could be.

Briefly stated then, the problem was that parents and teachers of L.D. children did not have adequate knowledge and understanding of learning disabilities and the effect these disabilities have on a child's ability to function at home, in the classroom and in all other areas of his life.

Documentation of the Problem

During an April, 1987, meeting of educational therapists, comments were made concerning the difficulty of getting parents to follow through on therapy homework assignments. It was the consensus of the group that parents generally lacked real understanding of the L.D.

problems and what it takes to help a child progress. One therapist said, "It's like the parents say,'Here's my child. Fix him.' They don't understand the problem, what we're attempting to do and how necessary the parents' help is." Other therapists commented on the difficulties they encountered with teachers and/or administrators who did not understand the valid needs of learning disabled students.

Upon discussing this problem with the President of the Central Association of Florida Therapists (C.A.F.T.), Mrs. Ann Hayden, it was learned that this need for information and support was widespread among Christian parents and teachers. Her belief was that there was a definite need for a Christian support and education group for parents and teachers of learning disabled children.

In the project location, documentation of the problem had been confirmed in parent - child -teacher frustration and failure. During 1985-86, one child was quite unsuccessful in her second grade class. She had been home schooled for kindergarten and first grade. Unfortunately, at that time she was not given an academic entry test. (Entry tests are now part of the school's enrollment procedure.) As the year progressed, the parents blamed the teacher for the child's lack of success. The teacher blamed the parents for poor

previous teaching and lack of discipline and organization in the home. The child was extremely distractible and unable to complete written assignments or keep an orderly notebook. Although psychological testing occurred later in the year, a working relationship could not be developed between the parents and the teacher. The mother compounded the problem by contacting other parents in an effort to justify her personal complaints about the teacher. The year ended with the child failing the year and the family leaving the school. As they sought another school, testing was done which revealed there were specific learning disabilities. A child failed; personal relationships were destroyed; a school failed to meet the needs of a family.

Another family with a diagnosed L.D. fifth grader decided to withdraw their child. They perceived that their child's teacher was insensitive to the student's needs. Each item of disagreement, academic or disciplinary, became a major controversy between the parents (particularly the mother) and the teacher. The student sensed the division between home and school and knew that his mother would defend him. He was not producing what he had demonstrated in the past that he was capable of doing. The teacher was aware that the way she handled every incident of the day would come under critical review. She felt personal responsibility

for whether or not the family stayed in the school while at the same time being under the obligation of maintaining the high standards of work and conduct demanded by the school administrators.

The parents' attitude was expressed in the following paragraphs which were part of a letter sent to the pastor of the church. They requested that a learning disability program be implemented at this school.

> "By educating the parents and teachers of these children's special learning needs, we can shed light on this problem and heal what the darkness of misunderstanding has tried to destroy--because for lack of knowledge, my people perish.
>
> The darkness is a battleground of frustration at home and school. It begins with the guilt that is put on the parents--that their child is lazy (or not trying). We ask ourselves, 'Where have we failed?' 'Are we not strict enough?' Confusion and frustration come out and the guilt is expressed in anger or depression--sometimes directed toward the child. The parents are frustrated, the teacher is frustrated, and, most of all, the child is frustrated. Because of the stress, the child's walls of defense go up and he shuts the door to learning out of self-preservation."

During teacher orientation in August, 1986, parents were invited to attend various teacher training sessions including a presentation on the characteristics of learning disabilities. The session was well attended and personal responses were very favorable. There was evidence that the participants were interested in continued information and support.

Parents and teachers needed a better understanding of the academic, emotional, social and personal needs of learning disabled children. Also, parents and teachers needed support of others who faced similar problems and frustrations of caring for and teaching these special children.

Analysis of the Causes

Individuals who had a specific learning disability or who had a close relative, especially a child, who had a learning disability were hungry for factual information on the subject. Books on the subject were devoured, newspaper articles were cut out and passed to other interested friends. Teachers and administrators might be harassed by a frustrated mother of a L.D. son. Her plea was for the "professionals" to please do something to help her son because she could not help him.

There was a lack of dissemination of understandable knowledge about learning disabilities. The desire for information was based on need. Until various individuals (parents, teachers, administrators) recognized certain problems as symptoms of a learning disability, there was no desire for information. However, once the initial gate was opened as to the validity of learning disabilities, there was then a demand for information.

There had been a great increase in the number of Christian schools. Many parents hoped that removal from public school would solve all their child's school-related problems. It was seen that all that Christian schools might do (smaller classes, select enrollment, better discipline) could not make learning disabilities vanish. The awakening was occurring that even Christian school students had learning disabilities. There were two choices for Christian schools. They could choose not to allow enrollment of L.D. students or they could choose to become equipped to meet the educational needs of these students. If the determination was made to provide help for the learning disabled, the educating of parents, teachers and administrators had to begin.

Without a basic understanding of learning disabilities, parents and teachers engaged in unproductive blaming of each other for a child's lack of success. Parents had a sense of isolation. Teachers thought the parents did not understand the special challenges of teaching a L.D. child.

Since L.D. children were of average to above average intelligence, and were usually strong in certain subjects or tasks, parents and teachers were often guilty of expecting the L.D. child to perform equally well on other tasks. Statements were made, such as, "You are so smart in science, why can't you spell? You

just need to try harder...pay attention...study more." The L.D. child was constantly faced with unrealistic expectations because of his demonstrated ability in areas of strength.

Another cause of difficulties was that some parents were also learning disabled. When parents received knowledge and understanding about their child's disabilities, there was often the revelation that they had been compensating for (or struggling with) the same disabilities. Without this understanding, parents might be hostile or defensive towards a teacher who was pointing out a child's problem when the parent had the same problem. Likewise, an uninformed teacher might unintentionally embarrass a parent who had the same disability as their child. There might be suggestions made for helping the child at home which the parent was unable to carry out. The teacher then blamed the parents for being uncooperative or uncaring about their child's progress.

School administrators who did not understand learning disabled students might have unrealistic expectations about what a classroom teacher could and should do to modify requirements for L.D. students. Disagreements had occurred over the "fairness" of oral testing, less spelling words, reduced assignments.

Lack of knowledge and understanding was a cause for

much of the friction among the adults who touched the lives of L.D. children.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Since a primary area of stress in the setting of this practicum had been relations between mothers of L.D. children and their child's teacher, information was sought regarding the ways that mothers deal with L.D. problems. One study (Faerstein, 1986) investigated the ways in which mothers cope with and were defensive against diagnosis and manifestations of symptomatic problems of learning disabled children. It was found that mothers generally evidenced coping mechanisms when dealing with medical, social and educational agencies and were able to obtain services for their L.D. children. However, defense mechanisms were more prevalent when mothers were in direct confrontation with a child. These defenses included projection, denial of the problem and displacement of anger on to the child. Contrary to traditional beliefs that diagnosis would bring shock or grief, mothers experienced relief at receiving diagnosis which confirmed their suspicions.

Mothers in the Faerstein study used the coping mechanism of "objectivity" rather than the defense mechanism of "isolation." They were able to separate the idea of something being wrong with their child from

their personal feelings. The mothers did experience isolation prior to diagnosis. These parents also experienced confusion (rather than denial) because they did not understand the problem.

Faerstein found that there was an average of 3.5 years elapsed time between the age of the child when the mother first suspected a problem and the time the child's problem was finally diagnosed. The gap in time was due to professionals and family who said there was no problem or the child would outgrow whatever seemed to be wrong. During the time before diagnosis, mothers imagined the problem to be either worse than it was (brain tumor, retardation) or emotionally based (which created feelings of guilt and responsibility for their child's disability). Fifty-eight percent of the mothers felt responsible in some way for the child's disability. L.D. children were not seen by the community as having a physical problem but rather as being "bad" or "different" and therefore undesirable. For this reason, mothers experienced isolation within the community and little support from their families.

Mothers also projected onto others what they thought about themselves: overwhelmed, angry, frustrated, unable to handle their child and being a "bad mother." Understanding was important in alleviating much of the mother's frustration. They sensed that

their perceptions were denied and discounted not only by friends and relatives but by professionals as well.

Although the academic difficulties of L.D. children had received attention, the lack of social competence and behavioral problems were as much or of more concern to parents and teachers alike. A 1986 study by Stephanie H. McConaughy, investigated the areas of social competence and behavior of 12-16 year old L.D. boys. The study showed that L.D. boys have significantly lower levels of social competence and more behavior problems compared to normative samples of boys in the same age range. The L.D. boys were lower in participation in activities, social involvement and school performance. On behavior problem scales, the L.D. boys had high scores reflecting immaturity, hostile-withdrawal aggressiveness and hyperactivity. No relationship was found between I.Q. and social competence or behavior problem scores. Other studies cited found that L.D. adolescents possessed poorer conversational skills, were less able to interpret non-verbal cues, had difficulty interacting with peers and had low self-esteem. Results suggested that deficits in social competence appeared at early ages among L.D. boys and increased in adolescence to a degree of deviance that warranted clinical concern. These findings indicated the need to address the social-emotional

needs of L.D. children as well as their academic needs.

Parents of L.D. children were concerned with their child's future and his social acceptance. According to Elizabeth Montgomery (1982) all children, including the learning disabled, build their feelings of self-worth through parental acceptance. The implications were that parents of L.D. children should avoid indulging in guilt feelings and instead focus their attention on the child's strengths.

Confirmation of parental influence on an L.D. child's self-esteem was established in Bryan & Pearl's 1981 review of studies. It was found that L.D. children's negative academic self concepts were often reinforced by low expectations of mothers and teachers.

The use of teacher written praise notes on students' work and systematic parental support had been investigated as to their effect on student performance in reading achievement (Imber, 1977; Hill, 1977). Both interventions contributed to improved student performance.

Another intervention studied had been counseling of parents, teachers and students (Friesen & Der, 1987). It was found that when teachers and students both received counseling, there was improvement in classroom behavior and self-esteem. Teacher/student counseling

was most effective in producing reading improvement.

An instructional simulation model had been used successfully to help elementary classroom teachers to identify learning disabled children, and to begin remediation programs in the classroom (Broadbent & Meehan, 1971).

Of primary consideration was the attitude of regular elementary teachers toward mainstreaming of learning disabled students. A comparison was made of the effectiveness of teacher workshops compared to direct assistance by a resource specialist (Singleton, 1976). It was found that direct assistance produced significantly more positive attitudes in teachers rather than the workshop approach which produced no significant differences in attitudes.

An often overlooked group of individuals was school boards. Their personal opinions could greatly effect the implementation and success of learning disability programs. Davidson (1981) found there to be a wide variety of perceptions and attitudes of school board members with regard to early identification of and intervention for the learning disabled. There was a lack of clarity and consistency in the areas of purpose, goals, procedures and techniques. This indicated another group of individuals in need of factual information concerning learning disabilities.

The research demonstrated that adults who have influence over L.D. children and their education needed a greater understanding of the particular needs of these special children.

The literature confirmed that mothers coped better when they had some understanding about their L.D. child. It is documented that teachers and parents faced not only meeting the academic needs, but also the socio-emotional needs, particularly of L.D. adolescent boys. Regular classroom teachers benefited from a combination of workshops and direct assistance to effectively help L.D. students. When the adults had a better understanding of learning disabilities, they were better prepared to help the L.D. children.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals

Teachers and parents would be more knowledgeable and understanding of the special needs of learning disabled children.

Parents and teachers would receive supportive encouragement from each other and other adults concerned with learning disabled children.

Objectives

An ongoing informative support group for parents and teachers of L.D. children would be formed by June, 1987. Topics would be selected by this writer. Specialists in fields related to learning disabilities would be invited to make specific presentations. As director of the organization, this writer would give at least three presentations annually. Participants would include interested adults from the project setting, from area Christian schools and from the community.

Information about learning disabilities would be presented to teachers. Direct assistance would be available to any teacher requesting help with students having academic, social or emotional difficulties. Students exhibiting symptoms associated with learning

disabilities would be referred for diagnostic testing.

In March, 1988, individual interviews with project participating parents and teachers of L.D. children would reveal that 90 percent of those interviewed would perceive a productive/cooperative relationship with the other adults working with the L.D. child.

Ninety percent of those adults who participated in at least half of this practicum project would indicate on a written evaluation form (developed by this writer) that they had a better understanding of the needs and characteristics of learning disabilities. On the same form, distributed in March, 1988, 80 percent of the responders would indicate that the practicum project should be ongoing.

A March, 1988, survey of participating educational therapists would reveal that at least 80 percent of the parents and teachers who participated in the practicum project had improved working relationships and were more active in the cooperative education of L.D. children.

Anticipated Outcome

By March, 1988, no L.D. student would have been withdrawn from the project setting due to the lack of school cooperation and/or educational therapy intervention or the lack of appropriate classroom / curriculum modifications. This would be measured in comparison with the number of L.D. students who

were withdrawn during the 1986-87 school year.

Mechanism for Recording Unexpected Events

This writer maintained a log of all events during the implementation of the practicum project. The log included unexpected events.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion And Evaluation of Possible Solutions

One possible solution would be for someone to work with individual teachers and parents on the particular difficulties they were encountering with each other or with the L.D. child. The mediator might be the principal or the educational therapist who was working with the child. The problem with this solution was that a principal might not be fully knowledgeable about learning disabilities. The therapist's available time might not permit the amount of counseling needed to resolve differences based on ignorance about L.D. problems.

A school program could be developed to serve the needs of parents and teachers of L.D. children. Again, there would be the question of leadership of such a program. Who would be invited to attend? Only parents and teachers of diagnosed L.D. children or all adults interested in knowing more about learning disabilities?

Another possibility would be informative newsletters which presented information on learning disabilities. This solution would provide some information, but there would not be the opportunity for questions, discussion, sharing and interaction.

A study was done by Thomas J. Giannotti and Robert E. Doyle (1982) which examined if working with parents to improve the parent-child relationship would affect positive changes in the self-concepts of L.D. elementary school children. Cited studies (Baldwin, Kalhorn, and Breese, 1945; Miller, 1971; Schwartz, 1966; Shoben, 1949; and Stogdill, 1936) gave credibility to the belief that parents who were accepting and understanding their children as individuals, and who had good rapport with them, tended to have children who had positive self-concepts and who were brighter, more spontaneous, and emotionally healthier than the children of parents who did not attempt to understand their children and who were either distant or very indulgent with them.

Giannotti and Doyle (1982), examined parental attitudinal change, changes in the children's perception of their parents' behaviors, and the teachers' reports of changes in observable classroom behaviors. The Parent Effectiveness Training Program (P.E.T.) was used as the tool for parental intervention. This program incorporated a cognitive approach with lectures and demonstrations, a group process approach through group discussion and role playing, and a behavioral approach through task analysis and the practice of new response behaviors reinforced by homework assignments.

The results included parents feeling more confident

in themselves as parents, greater awareness of the effects of their behavior on children, a greater feeling of acceptance of their children, a greater understanding of their needs, and a greater willingness to trust their children.

The children in the experimental group showed a greater increase in self-assessed self-concept. Teachers of these children reported that the students had less achievement anxiety, less external reliance and more actively sought positive relationships with their classroom teachers.

A plan for parent workshops was discussed by Adams (1979). These workshops included a developmental view of the causes of learning disabilities based on Piagetian developmental theory. Discussions included the parent's role in the treatment of children's learning difficulties.

Learning disability inservice training and workshops have been thoroughly investigated (Boeck & Foster, 1975; Carberry, 1981; Fiedler, 1985; "Informal Diagnosis," 1976; Ward, 1973). It was found that inservice training sessions were appropriate for increasing classroom teachers' information concerning learning disabilities.

A training program for parents, such as the P.E.T., could make a significant impact on parents, children,

and the classroom teachers, as well as on the relationships between and among these three groups.

Description and Justification for Selected Solution

The solution selected was to disseminate practical information to parents and teachers for the purpose of meeting the previously stated goals and objectives. Two methods of dissemination would occur. An informative organization would be formed. Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (C.R.O.S.S.) (see Appendix G), would include parents, teachers and educational therapists from area Christian schools who recognized the need for more information about the needs of learning disabled children and felt the need for a support group of other adults who faced similar difficulties.

The proposal for C.R.O.S.S. was presented to the Central Association of Florida Therapists (C.A.F.T.). Indications from the president of that organization had been very favorable for this project. The initial proposal would include the organization of eight sessions presented by area experts. Suggestions from a steering committee of C.A.F.T. members would assist in selecting guest speakers (see Appendix C). Possibilities included a pediatric physician, a chiropractic physician, a Christian psychologist, an educational therapist and other persons knowledgeable in

the field of learning disabilities.

Each meeting would consist of 45 minutes of teaching and 30 minutes of questions, answers and small group interaction. Sessions would end with attenders responding to a written evaluation form.

The target audience would be all adults who were interested in being better informed about learning disabilities, particularly in the Christian school setting.

Teachers in the project setting would receive information about learning disabilities in a training session during teacher orientation in August, 1987. The session would be taught by this writer. Teachers would be given referral procedures for students they suspected were learning disabled. This writer would do preliminary testing and diagnosis. Upon definite professional diagnosis of a severe learning disability and parental agreement, students would be staffed into educational therapy conducted by this writer. Close communication would be maintained with the classroom teacher as well as parents of the L.D. child.

If students did not need therapy but did need classroom modifications for their minor disabilities, this writer would guide the classroom teacher in making necessary changes. This process was used successfully on a limited basis during the 1986-87 school year.

Teachers in the project setting were very open to receive suggestions as to how to better meet the needs of L.D. students.

The writer would function in dual roles during this practicum implementation. One role would include on-site functions such as teacher trainer during orientation, student tester, educational therapist and liaison between teachers, parents, administrators and perhaps school board, in matters pertaining to learning disabilities. The other role would be parent/community oriented. This would include all facets of making the C.R.O.S.S. organization operational, developing the evaluation instruments and assessing the program continually. Networking would be facilitated by active participation in the Central Association of Florida Therapists. Other area Christian schools that were interested in information about providing services for learning disabled students would be personally contacted by an educational therapist and invited to attend C.R.O.S.S. meetings. Sample school and/or church bulletin announcements would be sent to schools three weeks before each scheduled meeting (see Appendix C). Personal letters of invitation with information about C.R.O.S.S. would be distributed to the pastors and principals of area Christian schools (see Appendix D).

Report of Action Taken

On March 21, 1987, a grant proposal for $500.00 was submitted to a possible donor. The request was to finance an informative support group for parents and teachers of L.D. children. The grant was funded immediately (see Appendix B).

The grant check was deposited in a checking account in a local bank by this writer and a colleague. It should be noted that it was necessary to have two people to open this kind of an account. By mutual agreement this writer chose the title of Director and the other person was named Secretary/Treasurer.

On April 10, 1987, a preliminary proposal for a support group was presented to the Central Association of Florida Therapists (C.A.F.T.) who gave educational therapy to L.D. students in Christian schools. The proposal was approved and a planning meeting scheduled

On May 2, 1987, a steering committee from C.A.F.T. met to brain-storm topics and speakers for the C.R.O.S.S. meetings (see Appendix C). The first meeting was scheduled for June 9, 1987.

Approval for this practicum project proposal was given on June 5, 1987.

After the initial C.R.O.S.S. meeting on June 9, 1987, specific planning began for the meetings of the 1987-88 school year. Guest speakers were contacted and

scheduled for available dates. Letters of confirmation were sent to each speakers on July 20, 1987 (see Appendix D).

Educational therapists were sent a cover letter, a schedule for making school or church bulletin announcements, a sample bulletin announcement (see Appendix C), and the calendar of C.R.O.S.S. meetings for 1987-88, August - March (see Appendix E).

Each speaker was given a follow-up call one week prior to their presentation to confirm arrangements.

The format of the meetings included:

1. Sign in (see Appendix C), name tags
2. Opening with prayer
3. Introduction of the guest speaker
4. Presentation (tape recorded) 45 minutes
5. Refreshments/fellowship 15 minutes
6. Questions and discussion 30 minutes
7. Closing prayer
8. Complete written evaluation form (see Appendix F)

Additions to the original proposal included tape recording presentations and sending out reminder post cards in early January. The post cards indicated the dates, topics and speakers for the remaining C.R.O.S.S. meetings (see Appendix D). A mailing list was developed from the sign-in sheets which included addresses as well as names. Tape duplication was possible through the church tape ministry. Tapes were sold in the church book store and at C.R.O.S.S. meetings. The addition of tapes became important for several reasons which will be

discussed in Chapter V, Results.

The other focus for this practicum involved the project site specifically. Teachers did not receive information during orientation about learning disabilities, diagnostic testing or the educational therapy available. Although an inservice training session had been discussed with the principal, she did not schedule it into the three weeks of teacher orientation.

This writer did work individually with teachers as they requested help for students who were having difficulty. With parental permission, the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude (DTLA) was given to students who showed signs of possibly being L.D. If test scores or types of errors indicated a learning disability, parents were referred to a certified school psychologist for specific diagnosis, usually with the administration of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R). If this evaluation indicated a learning disability, the family was encouraged to proceed with specific diagnostic testing and educational therapy.

By April, 1988, fifteen students had been given the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitude. Four students were receiving educational therapy. Seven students were scheduled for more diagnostic tests. Four students were receiving individual academic counseling in study

skills, organization, etc. Some tested students were not candidates for therapy. Classroom modifications were developed by this writer working with the teacher.

Extensive counseling was done with parents who had suspected that their child was L.D. Continued help was available whether or not a child began educational therapy.

Networking relationships were strengthened by mutual attendance between C.A.F.T. meetings and C.R.O.S.S. meetings. Area therapists demonstrated their support by attending C.R.O.S.S. meetings and by bringing parents and teachers of L.D. students with them. This writer attended C.A.F.T meetings and actively participated in the N.I.L.D. Winter Conference by giving three presentations.

The only solution strategy not completed was training during teacher orientation. All other actions met or exceeded the original plan.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The measures for analyzing the results included assessment of monthly and final evaluation forms completed by those who attended C.R.O.S.S. meetings. Confirmation of written responses was gained through interviews with participating parents, teachers and educational therapists.

Attendance at the C.R.O.S.S. meetings ranged from 18 to 79. Total attendance for the eight meetings was 252 with the mean of 32. Attendance fluctuation seemed dependent upon how well-known the speakers were.

Miss Grace Mutzabaugh, Executive Director of NILD, drew the largest audience. A panel discussion with no named speakers drew the smallest group. Other speakers had groups of around 25. The smaller meetings encouraged more participation and sharing. Larger meetings focused more on information.

Those who attended included adults from the project setting as well as other Christian school settings within a 50 mile radius. There was less regular participation by adults in the project setting than from other settings.

Fifteen out of 50 final evaluation forms were

completed and returned for a return rate of 30 percent. Eighty percent of those responding had attended five or more meetings. All responding participants indicated that they received a better understanding about the needs and characteristics of learning disabilities and they felt encouragement and support from meeting with other adults who shared similar challenges. Everyone who responded indicated a desire for C.R.O.S.S. meetings to continue and were willing to contribute donations to cover expenses. They also indicated that they would like meetings to continue to be taped with tapes made available for purchase. Tapes were used to evaluate speakers for future presentations, to share information with those who were unable to attend meetings and to inspire educational therapists in other geographic areas to begin support organizations.

As of April, 1988, no L.D. student had been withdrawn from the project setting. Parents who had a child in educational therapy had been extremely pleased with the progress already seen in their child. The testimony of these parents encouraged other parents to seek help.

There were some unexpected results from this project. Although the original proposal did not include L.D. adults, several adults, men and women, expressed their personal areas of disability. One 45 year old

dyslexic man and his wife attended most of the C.R.O.S.S. meetings. He had spent years trying various methods to overcome his inability to read and spell. As a result of C.R.O.S.S., he met an educational therapist and entered the educational therapy program.

As he began to master basic phonetic skills, there was an increase in self-esteem and personal aspirations. Occurrences such as being able to read a Red Lobster menu were sources of great joy and pride to both him and his wife. He no longer felt limited to a manual labor occupation.

Another result of C.R.O.S.S. was increased outreach for this writer. An invitation was extended and accepted to give three presentations at the 1988 NILD Winter Conference. One presentation discussed the formation of C.R.O.S.S. Those attending from the Southeastern United States expressed an interest in beginning similar support groups. When it was mentioned that tapes had been made of the C.R.O.S.S. presentations, there were ten requests to purchase copies of these tapes. The use of these tapes increased beyond local convenience to greater dissemination.

Interviews with parents, teachers and educational therapists (see Appendix F), confirmed the positive written evaluations responses. The most recurring word was "understanding." Parents indicated that the

increased understanding of L.D. symptoms helped them to be aware of their child's feelings (such as low self-esteem), and cope better with difficult areas. One father expressed that the home atmosphere was more at ease due to understanding their L.D. child's legitimate problems. The father felt that he might have compounded his child's problems if he had not received enlightening information. Parents also expressed their encouragement that their children were progressing better academically and emotionally.

Teachers who were interviewed expressed that their teaching techniques for all children had broadened due to information about different learning styles. They felt that they were more understanding and compassionate toward the L.D. students. They had also been more prepared to deal with parents who had some of the same L.D. problems as their children. Teachers were very open to suggestions for classroom modifications for L.D. children. Some teachers became more aware of their own learning styles and deficit areas. One teacher even requested that he be given diagnostic testing.

Conclusions

The primary goals and objectives of this project were met. The most successful component was C.R.O.S.S., as indicated by numerous comments relating to the support and information received from the meetings

(see Appendix F). The viability of C.R.O.S.S. will be determined by its continuation and if other geographic areas use it as a model for similar programs.

The writer's work within the project setting was successful. Those teachers who had students with difficulties did ask for assistance. This involved teachers in grades kindergarten through sixth. This indicated the openness of project teachers to seek out assistance for L.D. students. As research had shown (Singleton, 1976), teachers were affected most by direct assistance for L.D. students.

In conclusion, the results indicated that C.R.O.S.S. was a positive influence on parents and teachers of L.D. children and also helpful for L.D. adults. Direct assistance for classroom teachers should be maintained.

Recommendations

In forming an organization similar to Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (C.R.O.S.S.), it is recommended that counsel be received from an interested group such as Central Association of Florida Therapists (C.A.F.T.). It is also strongly encouraged that the director have an assistant who can take care of secretarial and treasury duties.

Inservice training in the area of learning disabilities should be a part of teacher orientation

with periodic mini-seminars during the school year.

A lending library of C.R.O.S.S. presentation tapes should be made available, especially for teachers.

The C.R.O.S.S. steering committee of C.A.F.T. members should have an annual "brain-storming" session in May to develop the programs for the following school year.

Each attender should receive a final evaluation form. Only one form was sent to each household. This did not allow both husband and wife to express their individual opinions.

In setting up a checking account for an organization such as C.R.O.S.S., research should be done in the area of becoming tax exempt. Also, careful selection of the bank to be used can avoid some account charges.

Presentations should include information which can be of help to L.D.adults.

Dissemination

Dissemination of this project has taken place through conference presentations, a radio interview and tape sales. Continued contact is being made with area Christian school principals who do not have a program for L.D. students. Invitations and calendars of the C.R.O.S.S. meetings have been sent.

Seven area schools currently offer the NILD

program. The educational therapists in these programs have been the encouragers for parents and teachers to attend C.R.O.S.S. meetings. Learning disabled adults have been reached through personal contacts and school and church bulletins.

Further dissemination occurred when the principal shared information about the NILD program with a school that she was evaluating out of state. The principal's information was gained partly through the C.R.O.S.S. presentation by Miss Grace Mutzabaugh.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DEFINITIONS

NORFOLK INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

Definition

Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities.

Specific Learning Disabilities exists as a distinct handicapping condition in the presence of average to superior intelligence, adequate sensory and motor systems, and adequate learning opportunities. The condition varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity.

Throughout life the condition can affect self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities.

Adopted by the
ACLD Board of Directors
September, 1984

NORFOLK INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

Characteristics of Learning Disabilities

Definitions of Perceptual Factors

Visual Discrimination	The ability to distinguish likenesses and differences among forms and symbols
Auditory Discrimination	The ability to perceive the differences between sounds and sequences of sounds
Visual Closure	The ability to recognize the whole when only parts are presented
Auditory Closure	The ability to identify auditory stimuli when part of it is missing
Blending	The ability to blend isolated sounds or syllables into words
Visual Figure-Ground	The discrimination of an object from its background; The ability to focus on one thing (figure) allowing all else to drop into the background (ground)
Auditory Figure-Ground	The ability to select relevant auditory stimuli from irrelevant The ability to inhibit background; to change one's focus of attention
Visual Memory	The ability to recall what's been seen
Auditory Memory	The ability to retain or recall auditory experience
Visual sequencing	The ability to position or recall visual stimuli in a serial order

Auditory Sequencing	The ability to hold: - a pattern of sounds within a word - a series of words in a sentence - a series of ideas
Auditory Association	The ability to relate spoken words and Comprehension and concepts to each other in a meaningful way

APPENDIX B

GRANT PROPOSAL

March 21, 1987

_____
_____
_____

Dear _____:

The attached request is for the purpose of funding the organization of C.R.O.S.S., Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students. The purpose of the organization will be to meet educational and support needs of adults who care for or teach learning disabled children.

As the Assistant Principal of _____ School, and Director of Testing and Educational Therapy, I will assume responsibility for the formation of this organization.

We are requesting the amount of $500.00 for the period of time from April 1, 1987 through February 26, 1988.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal. If there are any questions, please contact me (phone number).

Sincerely,

_____
Assistant Principal
_____ School

Submitted to : _____

Proposed Project : Organization of Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (C.R.O.S.S.)

Date of Project : April 1, 1987 to February 26, 1988 (initial project)

Amount Requested : $500.00

Submitted by : _____
Assistant Principal
_____ School
(street address)
(city, state zip code)

Date Submitted : March 23, 1987

Project Director : _____

Approving Institutional Official : _____
Principal
_____
School

Introduction

_____ School opened in January, 1985, with 29 students in kindergarten through third grade. The school currently has 150 students, kindergarten through fifth grade. Among these students are ten students who are having learning difficulties. Four students are diagnosed as learning disabled. Three students have I.Q.'s averaging 85. The other students do not have clearly defined reasons for their academic difficulties.

The school has also lost the enrollment of several families whose children have learning difficulties. Parents of learning disabled children have felt a lack of support from school personnel. There has been no organized means of becoming more informed about the special needs of learning disabled children. Neither has there been a network for Christian parents to be supportive of each other. One study (Faerstein, 1986) documents the veracity of the isolation and guilt felt particularly by mothers of learning disabled children.

As a ministry of (church name), the church has subsidized the school through the current school year. However, the school is to become self-supporting for the 1987-88 school year. Every attempt is being made to keep tuition as low as possible. Extra funds are not available for the establishment of C.R.O.S.S.

Statement of the Problem

During teacher orientation in August, 1986, parents were invited to attend various training sessions including a session on characteristics of learning disabilities. The session was well attended and personal responses were very favorable. There was evidence that the participants were interested in continued information and support.

The needs are two-fold. Parents and teachers need a better understanding of the academic, emotional, social and personal needs of learning disabled children. Also, parents and teachers need support of others who face similar problems and frustrations of caring for and teaching these special children.

Upon discussing this need with educational therapist, Mrs. Ann Hayden of Master's Academy, it was learned that this need for information and support is widespread among Christian parents and teachers. Her belief is that there is a definite need for a Christian support and education group for parents and teachers of learning disabled children. C.R.O.S.S. would meet this need.

Statement of Program

C.R.O.S.S. will consist of parents, teachers and educational therapists from Christian schools who recognize the need for more information about the needs

of learning disabled students and feel the need for a support group of other adults who face similar difficulties.

The group will meet for eight sessions between May 1, 1987, and February 26, 1988. The sessions will include specific teachings from area experts. Professionals will include a chiropractic physician, a pediatric physician, a Christian psychologist and other speakers recommended by a steering committee of educational therapists. Each session will also include small group discussions which will bring encouragement and support to the adults attending. Each session will conclude with attenders responding to a written evaluation form.

The goal of C.R.O.S.S. is to provide information and support to parents and teachers of learning disabled children.

The objectives include :

1. By responses on session evaluation forms, adults attending C.R.O.S.S. meetings will indicate that they have a better understanding of the needs and characteristics of learning disabled children.

2. Responses will indicate that the session gave encouragement and feelings of support from other adults attending the session.

3. Attendance will increase by at least 20% at each subsequent session.

4. In February, 1988, a final evaluation of the initial C.R.O.S.S. program will determine that the program should be continued.

Strategies include :

1. A steering committee of area Christian school educational therapists will be formed. There will be an initial planning session for the purpose of determining possible guest speakers, the focus of teaching and calendar planning.

2. Guest speakers will be contacted. Dates and specific areas to be taught will be confirmed.

3. A calendar of C.R.O.S.S. meetings will be organized. The purpose of the organization will be stated. The calendar will include the topics for each session and the speakers.

4. Facilities will be arranged for the meetings.

5. The calendar will be distributed to the educational therapists or contact person in each participating Christian school.

6. Publicity will be organized and presented by radio, newspaper and television.

7. An evaluation instrument will be developed to assess each session.

Proposed Preparation Calendar

April 4 : Meet with Mrs. Ann Hayden and area educational therapists. Brainstorm topics to be covered and possible guest speakers.

April 10 : Complete all contacts and finalize calendar. Complete facility arrangements.

April 15 : Complete distribution of promotional calendar of meetings to area Christian school contact people. Seek assistance for promotion from each contact person. Build reference list of schools and the C.R.O.S.S. representative of each.

Tentative Calendar

May Introduction to the purposes of C.R.O.S.S. Speaker

June	General learning disability characteristics and foundational information Speaker
August	Diagnosis and "Back to school" focus Speaker
September	Relationships : Teacher - Student - Parent - Administrator Panel presentation and discussion
October	Physical attributes of learning disabilities Speaker
November	Psychological and emotional concerns Speaker
January	Academic concerns Speaker
February	Rap-up discussion, evaluation of C.R.O.S.S., Feasibility of continuing the program

Agenda for the Meetings

Time : 7:30 - 9:00 p.m.

7:30 - 8:15	teaching
8:15 - 8:30	refreshment break
8:30 - 9:00	small group interaction, discussion, prayer

Evaluation Procedure

The steering committee will develop an evaluation form which will be used at the end of each session. A Likert-type scale will be used to allow for objective and comparative evaluation of each session. Space will be provided for personal comments as well.

Budget

Honorariums	$300.00
Copying/typing	50.00
Refreshments	50.00
Facility	50.00
Miscellaneous	50.00
Total	$500.00

APPENDIX C

PRELIMINARY ORGANIZATION MATERIALS

C.R.O.S.S.

Planning Meeting, May 2, 1987

The first planning session of C.R.O.S.S. took place at _____ Church, May 2, 1987. It was attended by the Director, Nancy Akins, the Secretary/Treasurer, Mandi Reel, and a steering committee consisting of representatives from the Central Association of Florida Therapists. These members are Mae Depew, Ann Hayden, Anna Martin, Lois Gilchrist, and Sharon Anthony.

The meeting opened in prayer by Ann Hayden. It was announced that a C.R.O.S.S. checking account was opened at Sun Bank with the money funded by Dr. Michael Froyd who accepted the C.R.O.S.S. grant proposal. The first item on the agenda was the discussion of topics for the initial eight C.R.O.S.S. meetings. The committee gave the following suggestions for topics.

- What is a learning disability? (general characteristics) - What is Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities and the Discovery program?
- What is Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students (C.R.O.S.S.)? (purpose...)
- Helping siblings to understand L.D.
- Where & how to get help for a L.D. child
- Parent as the advocate; How?
- How to treat the L.D. child vs. other siblings
- Classroom success for the L.D. student (modifications...) - Testing and diagnosis
- Teaching teachers about L.D. - prevention
- Homework success
- Discipline for the L.D. child
- Testing - How to take, adapt and modify them for L.D. students
- Case histories (progress of children) Ed and Pam testimonies
- L.D. from an adults perspective
- Suggested reading for parents and teachers
- Strategies for teachers, parents and child
- Organizational skills : memory
- Tax exemptions, insurance assistance after diagnosis of LD - N.I.L.D. & working through weaknesses compared to compensatory program
- Compensating in the high school
- School grade retention
- Nutrition
- Right and left brain functions
- Self esteem/ social development

- Learning styles (auditory, visual, kinesthetic)
- Educational therapy

Speakers were then discussed. Pediatric and chiropractic physicians were named as well as Christian psychologists. The following is the list of prospective speakers and the steering committee member who personally recommends the speaker.

- Christian psychologists and counselors :
Dr. Joann Cook (Lois); Terry Langford (Sharon); Charles Bell (Anna); Bill Richardson (Nancy); Dwight Bain (Anna)

- Chiropractic physicians :
Dr. Kevin Lott (Mae); Dr. Michael Froyd (Nancy);

- Other physicians :
Dr. Sherman, perceptual therapy (Anna); Dr. Gayle Fuqua, visual therapy (Mae); Dr. Condron, pediatric (Nancy);

- Therapist :
Rhonda Hemphill, speech/language (Anna); Dr. Janine Midgett, L.D. specialist (Ann)

A panel to share their perspectives of L.D. problems was discussed. This would consist of parents, teachers, therapists, administrators, and possibly a pastor. There was also discussion of providing a video of interviews with several L.D. children. Suggested participants for the panel are as follows.

- Parents :
Cree Haag; Diane Ryan; Cindy Prickett; Mrs. Chapman, Sue Peterson; Kitty Dillon; Pat Barkhead

- Teachers :
Chris Pinon; Deloris Jones; Sonda Conley; Netta Daroch

- Therapists :
Ann Hayden; Mae Depew

- Pastors/ Administrators :
Chris Parkin; Shirley Cashion; Pat Mennenga; Mr. Van Winkle; David Fallin; Chuck Green

There are many films and videos available to assist in presenting information about learning disabilities. The committee discussed showing one or two as a lead-in to a particular topic for a C.R.O.S.S. meeting. Among

those discussed were the following.

- Ed and Pam tape (N.I.L.D.)
- Right and Left Brain (Orton Society)
- Cipher in the Snow (Public library)
- Take a Walk in These Shoes

The present location for C.R.O.S.S. meetings will be _____ .

Ways of publicizing C.R.O.S.S. activities was discussed. Nancy Akins and Mandi Reel will be co-chairmen of this area. Several ways to publicize are through school bulletins, church bulletins, Christian radio (WAJL, WTLN), letters of invitation (particularly the initial meeting), and having a contact person for each school represented by C.A.F.T. as well as each steering committee member contacting at least one other school/church.

Meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month. This would give a tentative schedule as follows.

- June 9, 1987 ; August 11, 1987; Sept. 8, 1987; Oct. 13, 1987; Nov. 10, 1987; Jan. 12, 1988; Feb. 4, 1988*; March 8, 1988.

(* It is tentatively planned for the Feb. meeting to be a part of the mid-winter conference given by N.I.L.D.)

The time for the meetings is 7:30-9:00 p.m. There will be approximately 45 minutes of teaching, a short refreshment break, then a question/answer period or small group discussion monitored by the steering committee members.

Mandi Reel will oversee the area of refreshments for the meetings.

A short break was taken to tour the new worship center.

The next area of business was that of an evaluation instrument to be used at the meetings. Nancy Akins will be formulating this, but desired input from the steering committee. Several suggestions were given.

- Evaluate the population (for stats)
- Evaluate the response (for stats)
- Possible format : questions which can be answered on a scale of 1-5

- Suggested questions :
    -How do you rate the speaker?
    -How did you hear about C.R.O.S.S.?(have several choices)
    -Are you a Pastor, teacher, school board member, parent, or just interested in learning disabilities?
    -What is your reason for coming?
    -Was this meeting helpful?
    -What other topics would you like to have covered?
    -Which meetings have you attended?
    -What did you learn?
    -What one main idea did you gain from the presentation?
    -Will you be able to implement anything you have learned this evening?

Lastly, the first meeting was finalized. This will be a meeting which will give foundational information about C.R.O.S.S. (Nancy Akins), and learning disabilities (Ann Hayden). It was decided that a brief presentation of a typical day in the life of an L.D. child be acted out and narrated by the steering committee. It is entitled "A Day with Johnny." The meeting will be held at _____, Tuesday, June 9, in room _____, from 7:30-9:00 p.m. A nursery will be provided.

This report is respectfully submitted by Mandi Reel, secretary/treasurer of C.R.O.S.S., May 5, 1987.

Bulletin Announcements

This general format can be completed with the information on the C.R.O.S.S. calendar of meetings.

C.R.O.S.S.

Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students will meet Tuesday, _____, from 7:30-9:00 P.M. in room _____ at _____(address)_____. ____(Speaker's name)_____ will address the topic _____(topic)_____ . All interested adults are invited to attend. For more information, contact _____ or Nancy Akins.
(CAFT member)

Therapists' C.R.O.S.S. Calendar

Aug. 2	Bulletin announcement for Aug. 18 meeting
Aug. 18	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
Aug. 23	Bulletin announcement for Sept. 8 meeting
Sept. 8	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
Sept. 27	Bulletin announcement for Oct. 13 meeting
Oct. 13	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
Oct. 25	Bulletin announcement for Nov. 10 meeting
Nov. 10	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
Dec. 18 or Jan. 3	Bulletin announcement for Jan. 12 meeting
Jan. 10	Reminder for Jan. 12 meeting and Bulletin announcement for Feb. 4 meeting
Jan. 12	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
Feb. 4	C.R.O.S.S. meeting
	(Feb. 5-6 : Mid-winter conference)
Feb. 21	Bulletin announcement for Mar. 8 meeting
Mar. 8	C.R.O.S.S. meeting

Date: _____

C.R.O.S.S.

Sign in / Mail out Sheet

	Name	Address (with Zip Code)	School
1.			
2.			
3.			
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22.			

APPENDIX D

CORRESPONDENCE

July 20, 1987

Dear CAFT Member,

Isn't the summer flying by! Hope you are getting some relaxation.

We have been busy preparing for C.R.O.S.S. meetings which begin in August. Attached is the calendar of scheduled speakers, topics and dates. It is being mailed to everyone who attended the first C.R.O.S.S. meeting in June. Feel free to make copies and distribute or post them anywhere you think is appropriate.

Also included is a guide for your school or church bulletin announcements. We recommend running it for 2 or 3 weeks before the scheduled meeting. We've added a calendar for you with the reminder date 3 weeks before meetings. Hope this is helpful in planning your personal "things to do" calendar.

If you have questions or suggestions, feel free to contact me at work or at home.

We are excited to witness what God is doing here in Central Florida through Christian schools, NILD, CAFT, C.R.O.S.S. and <u>you</u>. May the Lord bless you for all that you are doing in His service.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins (Mrs.)
Director, C.R.O.S.S.

July 20, 1987

Dear ,

We are so pleased that you have agreed to be our C.R.O.S.S. guest speaker on _____ . We look forward to your sharing on the topic of _____ _____ . Our format will be for you to speak from 7:30 P.M. until about 8:15. We will have a 10-15 minute refreshment break and then encourage questions from the audience for you to answer. We will close the meeting at 9:00 P.M.

The meeting location is _____ .

It would be most helpful if you could send to me background information about yourself so that I may introduce you appropriately. Also, I would be glad to make copies of any handouts you plan to use. We plan for approximately 75 attenders.

Enclosed is a calendar of our C.R.O.S.S. meetings. This will give you an overview of the other topics we plan to cover.

We would welcome your attendance at any of the meetings.

If you have any questions or if you need other equipment such as an overhead projector, please feel free to call me.

Again, thank you for helping us to meet the needs of parents and teachers of learning disabled children.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins (Mrs.)
Director
Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students

January 5, 1987

Dear Friends,

As you establish priorities for 1988, we hope you will want to increase your understanding of learning disabilities.

C.R.O.S.S., Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students, will be addressing the following topics:

Jan. 12 Physical Aspects of Learning Disabilities
by Dr. Michael Froyd

Feb. 4 Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities (NILD) A Program for L.D. Students
by Grace Mutzabaugh, Director of NILD

Mar. 8 Relationships : Parents-Teachers-Administrators- Therapists
Panel discussion

All meetings are held at _____, from 7:30 - 9:00 P.M., in room _____. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins

January 5, 1987

Dear _____,

As a Christian education co-worker, I would like to share with you information about an excellent program for learning disabled students.

In 1973, Norfolk Christian Schools began to develop a program for children with learning disabilities. By 1982 the Norfolk Institute for Learning Disabilities (NILD) was organized to share the program with other Christian schools.

The Executive Director of NILD, Miss Grace Mutzabaugh, will be our guest speaker at C.R.O.S.S. (Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students) on Thursday, February 4, from 7:30 - 9:00 P.M. in room _____ at _____ . She will share information about the NILD program.

On the following days (February 5 & 6), NILD will host a Winter Conference at the Howard Johnson's on Colonial at I-4. This conference is extremely informative.

We would encourage you to prayerfully consider attending this Winter Conference. For further information and/or registration, please contact:

Norfolk Christian Schools
NILD
255 Thole Street
Norfolk, Va 23505

or

Mrs. Anna Martin, Area Coordinator
Pine Hills Christian Academy

Although we at _____ have just implemented the NILD program in this school year, we are excited about the positive changes we are already seeing in our LD students and their families. We highly recommend this program.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins (Mrs.)
Assistant Principal, _____
C.R.O.S.S. Director

Dear _____,

Thank you for your presentation at the C.R.O.S.S. meeting on September 8, 1987. The surveys indicated that your information was very helpful in better understanding the complexity of diagnosing learning disabled children.

Please find enclosed a tape of your presentation. If you have need for more, they are available.

Again, thank you for sharing with us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins (Mrs.)
C.R.O.S.S. Director

APPENDIX E

CALENDAR

Christian Resource and Outreach for Special Students
1987-88 Calendar of Meetings

We cordially invite adults who wish to become better informed about learning disabilities and their effects to the following C.R.O.S.S. meetings. All meetings will be held from 7:30-9:00 P.M. in room _____ at _____ For more information, contact your school's educational therapist or Mrs. Nancy Akins,

Date	**Presenter**	**Topic**
Aug. 18	Nancy Akins	Academic Concerns
Sept. 8	Dr. Joann Cook	Testing and Diagnosis: Is My Child Learning Disabled? Diagnosis, testing
Oct. 13	Bill Richardson	Psychological and Emotional Concerns for the L.D. Child Family interaction Helping siblings understand How to treat L.D. child vs. other siblings Discipline for the L.D. child Self-esteem/social development
Nov. 10	Nancy Akins	What is it like to be L.D.? Right & left brain functions Simulations
Jan. 12	Dr. Michael Froyd	Physical Aspects of Learning Disabilities
Feb. 4	Grace Mutzabaugh	Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities What is NILD? What is the Discovery Program? How does NILD compare with other L.D. Programs? What are the distinctives? What is educational therapy? How can our school begin a NILD program?

Mar. 8	Panel discussion	Relationships: Parents-Teachers Administrators-therapists Parent as the advocate; How? Strategies Viewing the L.D. child

APPENDIX F

EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS AND SAMPLE RESPONSES

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS
Monthly Meeting Assessment for _____ (date)
Topic :_____ Speaker: _____

In order to better meet your needs and interest, we would like to have your thoughts about this meeting. Please take a few moments to complete the section below. We encourage you to share any other comments you would like to make. Thank you for your time, interest and input.

Please check ( ) the appropriate answers for the following.

1. I am a : _____parent _____teacher _____administrator
_____school board member _____other _____

2. I was informed about this C.R.O.S.S. meeting by:
_____school _____friend _____radio _____T.V.
_____church bulletin _____teacher
_____other_____

3. The presentation of information was :
_____understandable _____too detailed _____helpful
_____not useful

The presentation would have been better if
_____

4. My reason for coming was _____

_____

5. I think the main idea of the presentation was

_____

6. I (can, cannot) use anything I have learned tonight.
Please explain. _____

_____

7. I would like to see the following topics presented at other C.R.O.S.S. meetings. _____

_____

Speaker(s) I would recommend include :

_____

8. I (would, would not) like to attend another C.R.O.S.S. meeting. Why or why not?

---

9. The meeting could be improved by

Additional comments : _____

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

Final Evaluation

Dear C.R.O.S.S. Attender,

We are so pleased that you have been a C.R.O.S.S. attender. We are now in the process of evaluating the continuation of the program. Please help us by completing the following information and returning it in the provided envelope by Tuesday, March 22, 1988. Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely in Christ,

Nancy T. Akins (Mrs.)
C.R.O.S.S. Director

1. Please check the C.R.O.S.S. meetings you have attended.

June 9, 1987 ; Mrs. Ann Hayden, Characteristic of L.D.

August 18, 1987 ; Mrs. Nancy Akins, Academic Concerns

Sept. 8, 1987 ; Dr. Joann Cook, Testing & Diagnosis

Oct. 13, 1987 ; Mr. Bill Richardson, Psychological & Emotional Concerns

Nov. 10, 1987 ; Mrs. Akins, Ed & Pam Testimony-by tape

Jan. 12, 1988 ; Dr. Michael Froyd, Physical Aspects

Feb. 4, 1988 ; Miss Grace Mutzabaugh, NILD

March 8, 1988 ; Panel discussion, relationships

2. Are you interested in attending more C.R.O.S.S. meetings? _____ yes, _____ no

3. If yes, which topics are of most interest to you?

Suggested speakers : _____

4. Which schedule of meetings would be most appropriate for you?

monthly (Sept., Oct., Nov., Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May)

bi-monthly (Sept., Nov., Jan., March, May)

quarterly (Aug., Nov., March., June)

other (_____)

5. Would you care to donate $1.00 per person at each meeting you attend to cover costs of honorariums, refreshments, printing, etc? ____ yes, ____ no

6. Have you personally purchased any of the C.R.O.S.S. tapes? ____ yes, ____ no

Would you be interested in the C.R.O.S.S. tape ministry continuing? _____ yes, ____ no

7. If C.R.O.S.S. has been of benefit to you, please state in what way.

_____

_____

8. If you know of others who may be interested in attending C.R.O.S.S. meetings, please indicate their names and addresses to be added to our mailing list.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

9. Please add any other comments or suggestions you would care to make.

_____

_____

_____

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

A. Parents

1. Do you think the information given this year has helped you to be a better parent to your L.D. child? If so, in what ways?

2. Have you received personal insights about yourself or other individuals who may have learning disabilities? Please explain.

3. What would you say have been the greatest strengths of the resource and support offered this year? Greatest weaknesses?

4. Do you think your child has progressed differently than might have been expected as a result of your better understanding of specific learning disabilities? Academically? Emotionally? Socially?

5. Has your family unit been effected by the information gained?

B. Teachers

1. Have you modified your previous classroom teaching style as a result of information presented about learning disabled children? If yes, please explain.

2. Are you getting more positive responses as a result of classroom modifications? Academically? Socially? Emotionally?

3. Can you detect a difference in your attitude toward L.D. students as a result of new knowledge? Please explain.

4. Please assess any differences noted in parental behavior as a result of new knowledge about L.D. More cooperative? More realistic expectations for child? Teacher? Parent?

5. In what areas of learning disabilities do you think you need more information?

C. Educational Therapists

1. How many parents have been willing to attend C.R.O.S.S. meetings? Teachers?

2. Can you define differences in parents who attended at least four C.R.O.S.S. meetings and those who did not attend any?

3. Can you determine if C.R.O.S.S. has effected your working relationships with parents? Teachers?

4. In your opinion is there value in continuing the C.R.O.S.S. program? If so, what modifications should be made in the program?

Suggested future topics:

Responses to the Final Written Evaluation Form

"It has been a real blessing being around fellow Christians that have the same problem or work with people who have L.D. problems."

"It helps to understand L.D. problems more and meeting other parents in the same situation."

"I appreciate C.R.O.S.S. and the information it has given me. Maybe we could have a covered dish supper in September with parents and children for fellowship and time of sharing. Thank you!"

"Having recently discovered I have an L.D. child, the meetings have been basic in our understanding."

"Thanks, Nancy, for meeting the needs of many of us."

"This has been useful and practical information. I am more aware of resources and fellowship with parents."

"Tapes were very helpful. Also, the opportunity for our parents to share is tremendous."

"Very informative. Helped us (parents) understand our L.D. child."

"C.R.O.S.S. has given our family a better over all understanding of the facts and ways that having an L.D. child effects our family and how the L.D. child's course for life can be altered through proper therapy and continued closeness with the Lord."

"We love and appreciate you!"

"Insight into L.D. problems was given. Also, there was fellowship with others who have enthusiasm and love for these students."

"Meetings have been high quality and well attended. I appreciate the coffee. I would also like more opportunities to have small discussions with others and discuss problems."

"The more I know about L.D. the more it helps me and my relationship with my son."

"Thank you for everything you have given to us through C.R.O.S.S."

"C.R.O.S.S. has helped me to have a more understanding heart toward both L.D. children and non-L.D. children. I have realized that children as well as adults learn differently. God created us as individuals, even in our learning abilities."

"The scripture, 'My people perish because of lack of knowledge' applies to L.D. children. L.D. children are perishing educationally and spiritually due to teachers' and parents' lack of knowledge in the area of learning disability. C.R.O.S.S. is God's way of helping to get the knowledge to parents and teachers, so His people (adults and children) will not perish. Thank you, Nancy, for the knowledge I have gained."

APPENDIX G

MINUTES OF EACH C.R.O.S.S. MEETING

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

Introductory Meeting, June 9, 1987

At 7:30 P.M., the first meeting of C.R.O.S.S. was opened by Nancy Akins, director. A presentation, Spend a Day with Johnny, was given by Lois Gilchrist, narrated by Mandi Reel.

Mrs. Akins then introduced Mrs. Ann Hayden, President of the Central Association of Florida Therapists (CAFT), educational therapist at The Master's Academy and recently selected Central Florida representative for the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities (NILD). After prayer, Mrs. Hayden paralleled the "Johnny" presentation with specific, everyday evidence of difficulties encountered by the learning disabled child. The absence of "professional" terminology made her comments understandable for all attenders.

Before the refreshment break at 8:25, Mrs. Akins introduced all participating educational therapists and their schools. During the break it was evident that all those present did indeed share a common interest and were excited about getting to talk with others.

The meeting was called back to order at 8:35. Mrs. Akins shared the formation and purposes of C.R.O.S.S. After a closing prayer, the 37 attenders were asked to complete the evaluation form. Twenty-four forms were returned (65% return rate). The comments were very positive. The only negative response was that the room needed to be cooler (air conditioner was not working). The planned meeting was concluded at 9:00 P.M., however many attenders continued sharing together until after 10:00 P.M.

Unexpected Outcomes

At least three adults present indicated their own learning disabilities and wondered what help is available for them.

The _____ County President of A.C.L.D., Lynn Foley, attended the meeting and was able to offer information about an adult program at a local community college.

Mrs. Foley and Mrs. Akins have arranged to share information that each one needs about the other's resources. Mrs. Akins will receive the A.C.L.D. newsletter; Mrs. Foley will receive the calendar of C.R.O.S.S. meetings and also received a list of

Christian schools that offer therapy for learning disabled students.

Sample Evaluation Comments

Spend a Day with Johnny

-"Seeing in pantomime the almost picture perfect view of my son's morning makes me more sensitive to his problem." -"The presentation provided empathy and a tenderness for these children."

-"The beginning skit was terrific. It brought tears to my eyes."

General Comments

-"Very informative. I was touched and now understand what my child is experiencing." (Parent)

-"The meeting was excellent. I'm grateful for the Christian background." (Parent)

-"I want to do anything I can to be better informed." (Parent of L.D. child)

-"I would love to have a tape of the evening." (Teacher)

-"All the teachers at _____ school should hear what Ann Hayden said tonight." (Teacher)

-"I feel as parents we're ready to prayerfully consider and absorb all information. I think of our minds as sponges. We are so eager to finally find help." (Parent)

-"I praise God for this group and will continue to come. Thank you for all concerned. Thank God!" (Parent)

-"The fellowship with parents was great." (Parent) -"The sharing is important; the 'care' is great." (Parent/Teacher)

-"Appreciated the fact of making this meeting Christ honoring. Loved the interaction." (Parent/Teacher)

Classification of Attenders

From the 24 evaluations returned, the following information was obtained.

20 parents
5 teachers
1 administrator
1 school nurse
1 P.T.A. president
1 future therapist

Note: Responders could mark more than one category.
i.e. parent/teacher)

Summary

For the first effort, C.R.O.S.S. was quite successful in meeting the objectives of being informative and supportive. The evaluation form is adequate and will not be revised at this time. The meeting format is appropriate and will be continued. The facility arrangement is appropriate, other than requesting different chairs (padded), assuring air conditioning and taping subsequent meetings.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

August 18, 1987

Academic Concerns

by

Mrs. Nancy T. Akins

Twenty-five adults attended the second C.R.O.S.S. meeting on August 18, 1987. The writer addressed the topic of Academic Concerns and the Learning Disabled Student.

Specific characteristics of learning disabled students were discussed. Realistic expectations between teachers and parents were highlighted. Classroom and homework modifications were suggested.

Of those attending, 24 are parents, 9 are teachers. Survey responses were positive. Suggestions were made that handouts would be helpful and more teachers should attend.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

September 8, 1987

Diagnosis
by
Dr. Joann Cook

Dr. Joann Cook was the speaker for the third C.R.O.S.S. meeting on September 8, 1987. She addressed the complex issue of testing for and diagnosing learning disabilities.

The twenty six attenders included eighteen parents and six teachers. Comments were generally favorable but five attenders thought the material covered was too detailed and/or technical. Three expressed a desire for handouts or visual aids.

After the meeting, informal discussions were held with other educational therapists to determine what could be done to increase attendance. Commitments were made to send personal letters of invitation to potential attenders. It was decided that the day after Labor Day was not an ideal choice of date.

Unexpected Outcome

As a result of the writer's August 18, 1987, C.R.O.S.S. presentation, she has been invited to be a seminar leader at the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities Winter Conference. The conference includes educational therapists from the southeastern states and will be held February 5 and 6, 1988, in Orlando, Florida.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

October 13, 1987

The guest speaker for the October 13, 1987 C.R.O.S.S. meeting was Mr. Bill Richardson, a Christian psychologist. Mr Richardson does family counseling, including families who have learning disabled children.

Mr. Richardson began his presentation with background information on current research pertaining to the lack of acceptance of learning disabled children by parents, teachers and peers. From this strong evidence, he outlined seven ways to positively interact, particularly with learning disabled children. The suggestions included:

1) Acknowledge assets
2) Catch them doing good
3) Have fun with them
4) Give doable tasks...Set up for success
5) Acknowledge improvements, however slight
6) Find positive in failure
7) Acknowledge contributions to family or class

The information was exceptionally well received. There were immediate requests (accompanied with payment) for copies of the tape. One teacher reported in a faculty meeting that it was an extremely beneficial meeting for enhancing her relationship with her own non-disabled daughter. The principal requested that the tape be played at the next faculty meeting.

Some attenders desired more information and attended a parenting seminar which was held by Mr. Richardson.

27 adults attended
25 evaluations were submitted
(including 17 parents, 10 teachers, 2 educational therapists, 2 administrators and 1 R.N.)

The evaluations were extremely positive. There were no negative comments.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

November 10, 1987

Nancy Akins opened the meeting with some transparency simulations of learning difficulties which are provided in the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities training program. The "Ed and Pam Testimony" video was then shown. The tape is a testimony of two adults who have learning disabilities but have completed NILD therapy. In his 20's, Ed relates various experiences he had while in school and unable to read or spell. He was passed through eleventh grade but unable to graduate. He entered therapy as an adult and became a successful reader and speller after two years in therapy.

Unexpected Outcomes

Two special outcomes were an outgrowth of this meeting. One first time attender had been tutoring a 24 year old man in reading. As a result of some earlier information and this meeting, the lady asked if she and her husband could sponsor a child who needed educational therapy but whose family is unable to pay for it. Arrangements are being made for this scholarship.

In the same evening, it became evident that one attender, a 45 year old man, is dyslexic and seeking any help possible for his problem. An attending therapist agreed to accept this man for therapy. The director of the program, Grace Mutzabaugh, will be contacted to obtain information on the differences in therapy for an adult and what realistic expectations should be.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

January 12, 1988

Dr. Michael Froyd, a chiropractic physician, presented information about the physical aspects which can affect learning as well as the total functioning of the body. His discussion and handout included information on the nervous system, exercise, nutrition, sleep and relaxation.

The evaluations were very positive. Information was very understandable and not overly technical.

Of the 20 people who attended, evaluations were turned in from 12 parents, 2 teachers, 1 therapists and one wife whose husband is dyslexic.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

February 5, 1988

This meeting was outstanding. The 79 attenders included at least one school board member, 20 teachers, more than 5 therapists, 28 parents and several interested adults. It was an added encouragement that the staff of this writer's school responded to a special request to attend. This included the principal, secretary and 10 teachers. Miss Grace Mutzabaugh, Executive Director of the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities, discussed the distinctives of the NILD program. She is an inspiring speaker and was very well received.

An additional highlight was the testimony of a 45 year old dyslexic man who has recently begun the NILD educational therapy. As he and his wife simply shared what his life has been like without being able to read, write or spell, many in the audience were deeply touched.

Our principal received a deeper understanding of the mutual goals shared in the NILD program and our school philosophy. She has now shared information about the NILD program with a Christian school in Birmingham, Alabama. Our teachers have also indicated a better understanding of the NILD philosophy. One teacher who attended this C.R.O.S.S. meeting had been quite frustrated with a student who is obviously academically bright, but has terrible organizational skills. There had been great friction between the mother and teacher. They sat side by side in the meeting and together gained new insights as to how to better help the child. One male teacher who had exhibited some L.D. symptoms came to this writer and said, "I suppose everyone sees some characteristics of himself when they hear L.D. symptoms, but I saw too much of myself. Will you test me?" Testing is being done.

A lady who attended this C.R.O.S.S. meeting met a lady from Valdosta, Georgia, the following day at a children's leadership conference. The discussion turned to the difficulties of learning disabled students. The C.R.O.S.S. attender shared information about the NILD program and gave this writer the lady's address to be able to send her a NILD brochure.

Some C.R.O.S.S. attenders have children in public school programs. One therapist who is the _____ County president of A.C.L.D. is able to supply them with the

information and support that they need concerning the public school program.

Surveys primarily expressed the desire for a longer presentation. Miss Mutzabaugh commented on what an enthusiastic, inquiring group the C.R.O.S.S. attenders are.

Expanded Outcomes

As an outgrowth of the C.R.O.S.S. meetings, this writer was asked to do three presentations at the NILD Winter Conference held in Orlando on February 5-6, 1988. The topics included "What Educational Therapists Should Know About the Brain," "Starting Educational Therapy? Begin!" and "C.R.O.S.S. (A Support Organization."

A Miami therapist expressed an interest in forming a C.R.O.S.S. organization in that area.

Unexpectedly, there were requests for ten tapes of past C.R.O.S.S. meetings. Sample calendars and evaluation forms were distributed.

The wife of a school board member, who attended the C.R.O.S.S. meeting, also attended the NILD conference. She is considering becoming a therapist and has an L.D. son.

One very regular C.R.O.S.S. attender, a parent, came to the conference. She shared the new insights she is gaining as a parent of an L.D. son. She was asked to be on the March panel at C.R.O.S.S. to present the parent's point of view.

Additional outcomes occurred during an educational conference the following week. This writer gave presentations on teaching reading (outgrowth of her first Nova practicum) and history. The hostess of a local radio program asked to tape a discussion about reading methods and difficulties. Part of the discussion included learning disabilities and the NILD program. The program will be aired on a Christian radio station which reaches the Central Florida area.

Also, at this conference, the principal of a new Christian school was told to contact this writer for information about a Christian program for L.D. students. Contact was made with the principal and two of her teachers who are interested in helping the L.D. children. They were given the NILD brochure and added to the C.R.O.S.S. mailing list.

These are some of the known effects of the C.R.O.S.S. program at the present time. It is exciting to consider what unknown results are also occurring in a ripple effect.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCE AND OUTREACH FOR SPECIAL STUDENTS

March 8, 1988

The last scheduled meeting of C.R.O.S.S. was a panel discussion. The panel consisted of a parent who has a 14 year old L.D. son, a teacher who has worked with several learning disabled children in her classroom and this writer who is or has been in each role (parent of L.D. child, teacher, administrator and therapist).

First, each panel member discussed her own perspective of working with an L.D. child as well as the challenges of working in cooperation with other adults working with L.D. children. The attenders were then invited to share their questions or points of view. Because the group was small (18), several parents shared very openly about past hurts which occurred as they were seeking help for their L.D. child. It was obvious that parents need support and encouragement as well as their L.D. children.

It was also important for this writer to see the benefit of small meetings as well as large ones. One parent had been a first attender at the previous meeting which had 79 attenders. She did not feel comfortable sharing personal hurts in that large group meeting. However, in the small March meeting she was able to express herself and receive support from others.

Due to the supportive rather than merely informative nature of this meeting, it was decided that the usual objective evaluation form would not be appropriate. However, by a visual count, there were at least two therapists, three teachers, two L.D. children and the rest parents for a total of 18 attenders.

APPENDIX H

RECOMMENDED READINGS FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

RECOMMENDED READING FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS

1. Learning Disabilities: A Family Affair
   by Betty B. Osman
   Random House, NY 1979

2. No One To Play With
   by Betty B. Osman
   Random House, NY

3. No Easy Answers
   by Sally L. Smith
   Bantam Books, 1979

4. A Parent's Guide To Learning Disabilities
   by Alice C. D'Antoni
   Darrel G. Minifie
   Elsie R. Minifie
   The Continental Press, Inc.

5. The Learning Disabled Child: Ways That Parents Can Help
   by Suzanne H. Stevens
   John F. Blair, Publisher
   1406 Plaza Drive
   Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103
   1-800-222-9796

6. Classroom Success For The Learning Disabled Child
   By Suzanne H. Stevens
   John F. Blair, Publisher
   1406 Plaza Drive
   Winston-Salem, N.C. 27103
   1-800-222-9796

7. An Uncommon Gift
   by James Evans
   Westminister Press, 1983

APPENDIX I

NORFOLK INSTITUTE OF LEARNING DISABILITIES INFORMATION

NORFOLK INSTITUTE FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

presents

THE DISCOVERY CENTER PROGRAM

HOW DID THE PROGRAM BEGIN?

Exceptional students are a part of God's creation and have dignity, worth and purpose whether they are retarded, average or genius. These students can become members of the body of Christ by faith in Him and need spiritual growth and training in every area of their potential to fulfill God's purpose for them. Therefore, Christian schools must share the responsibility for them as well as for children without disabilities.

This conviction led Norfolk Christian Schools in 1973 to found a program for children with learning disabilities. The Norfolk Institute for Learning Disabilities was organized in 1982 because concerned Christian leaders believed that this very productive program should be shared with other schools as widely as possible.

WHO IS A CANDIDATE FOR THIS PROGRAM?

Potential students for this program are those experiencing obvious frustration in areas related to school performance such as poor spelling, difficulty with reading or math, etc.

WHO TEACHES THESE STUDENTS?

The students are taught by educational therapists who are certified teachers and who receive intensive, on-going training at the Discovery Center.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EDUCATIONAL THERAPY PROGRAM?

The Discovery Center program developed by NILD centers on strengthening areas of weakness in perception and developing of thinking processes. Compensation techniques are avoided. Instead, intensive individual therapy is given three hours a week to each student with techniques especially designed to improve performance through the integration of perception and cognition.

Parents are extensively involved in the process at home and work closely with the therapist. The number of years in which a student is enrolled varies according to the severity of the deficit. The ultimate objective is the development of self-reliance and logical thinking in both academic and living situations.

HOW IS THERAPY AND CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION INTEGRATED?

Periodic communication between the classroom teacher and the therapist allows for the sharing of insights and practical suggestions leading to an improved educational program for each student.

HOW IS THE STUDENT'S FAMILY INVOLVED?

The parents are required to come to orientation meetings, attend the first six therapy sessions for special training in order to carry on the therapy at home, and observe a therapy session on a monthly basis.

WHAT IS THE CRITERIA FOR COMPLETION OF THE PROGRAM?

A student is dismissed from the program when he becomes independent and successful in the regular classroom. A minimum of three years is usually necessary to achieve this kind of success.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM FINANCED?

Every effort is made to keep costs within reach of our families. This program cannot become a liability on the regular school operational budget. Tuition must cover therapist's salary, instructional materials and administrative expenses. This tuition is in addition to the regular school tuition. Families are contracted on a yearly basis.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Those of us in Christian school education have been baffled by students who have passed our admissions examinations, yet who have failed to achieve their academic potential in the classroom despite individual attention, tutoring and various other attempts to assist them. We know from testing and observation that these students were of average or above-average intelligence; yet they were obviously hampered by one or more of the many symptoms which characterize pupils with Learning Disabilities. It should be pointed out at the start that students who have difficulties of this kind will not necessarily manifest all of these symptoms simultaneously. They will, however, possess them in sufficient degrees to be noticeable in the classroom situation over a period of time and to affect their work adversely.

The following are perhaps the most common symptoms of learning disabilities:

1. Hyperactivity
2. Short attention span
3. Difficulty in handling symbols
4. Difficulty in abstract thinking
5. Poor auditory discrimination
6. Poor recall - inability to retain
7. Poor fine muscle control
8. Inability to generalize
9. Uneven levels in academic achievement in various testing situations
10. Difficulty with mathematics skills
11. Reversals of letters and words when learning to read
12. Difficulty writing on a straight line
13. Cramped or illegible handwriting; persistent spelling errors
14. Difficulty connecting horizontal and vertical lines
15. Difficulty in direction and laterality
16. Continued uncertainty of left and right handedness
17. Sometimes excessively submissive or aggressive
18. Normal intelligence with patchy defects in verbal and performance levels
19. Difficulty in finding the "right" word when speaking
20. Similar problems among relatives
21. Excessive yawning and sleepiness in class

Teachers unfamiliar with the implications of these symptoms may well consider this kind of pupil either a slow learner, immature, spoiled, or merely lazy. However, nothing is more devastating to the self image of each student than the mounting feeling of guilt and

frustration caused by their inability to perform nearer to the level of their mental capabilities. Considerable thought and research over a period of years by professionals has culminated in a program of educational therapy to help children with learning disabilities.

Educational Therapy known as the Discovery Program is not to aid the retarded child, the emotionally disturbed, or those children possessing serious motor control disfunctions. On the contrary, children who possess learning disabilities of the type which the Program helps to overcome are those whose evaluations indicate clearly that their difficulties do not fall into these categories. The combination of therapy and academic work aims to yield favorable results and ultimately allow the student to function much more efficiently in the classroom and life itself. Therefore, we can gain from working with these students over a short term (two to three years) that which will allow them to fit back into a normal curriculum. Retarded children will never fit into a regular classroom.

The following tasks will be performed in _____ School, using the Norfolk Institute of Learning Disabilities program (N.I.L.D.):

1. Test children showing symptoms of learning disabilities who are referred to us by the classroom teacher or by parents. Testing is never done without parental permission
2. Give evaluations and recommendations to teachers on how to work with these children in the regular class.
3. Review on a regular basis teacher's progress reports on these children.
4. Have conferences with parents of all children tested.
5. Give individually prescribed educational therapy to the children with impairments and train parents to give similar help at home.

The cost of the Discovery Program

In keeping with the philosophy of _____ School of trying to keep costs in a range of most families, the Discovery Program must not be a liability on the regular school operational budget nor can it be so high as to be possible only for the very affluent. The fees are calculated to cover salaries, administrative expenses, etc. Any books or material needed for the child will be

charged as needed. Discovery Program fees are in addition to the regular school tuition and paid to _____ School designated for educational therapy. Parents who enter their children must be committed to a full program of two to three years. Contracts are issued on a yearly basis.